IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the **TITLE** as follows:

SAFETY SPINAL ~~CATHETER~~ NEEDLE

Please amend paragraph **[0032]** as follows:

[0032] The innermost component of the assembly is preferably fashioned as a solid central stylet 17. When inserted in the support needle 19 (discussed in detail further herein), the central stylet 17 prevents the entry of extraneous tissue or other material into the support needle opening 28 during insertion. The central stylet may also serve as a "stiffening" portion of the assembly providing extra support and stiffness to the entire assembly. The hub 25 of the central stylet 17 is outermost, or located at an extreme proximal end 26 of assembly 10, because the central stylet 17 is the first to be removed. An attachment structure, such as tab [[34]]32, may be located on the hub 25 for retaining the central stylet 17 in the support needle 25. The tab [[34]]32 may interact with a corresponding attachment structure on the hub 35 of the support needle 19[[,]].

Please amend paragraph **[0036]** as follows:

[0036] The outermost layer of the assembly 10 is the flexible needle 15 itself. It preferably is approximately 23 g and about the length of a conventional spinal needle, although different diameters and lengths for use with different procedures is within the scope of the present invention. Conventional plastic catheter material ~~maybe~~ may be used in its construction. The flexible needle material ~~maybe~~ may be reinforced with a flat ribbon internal spring 45 (shown in FIG.5), an internal or external wire wrap, or other reinforcing structure. Alternative materials, and various materials in combination, also ~~maybe~~ may be used to construct a flexible needle 15. Suitable catheter material produces a flexible needle 15 which is fairly stiff and has a sufficiently high tensile strength to maintain structural integrity during insertion, while in the body, and during retraction from a patient. A flexible needle 15 desirably possesses sufficient transverse flexibility to deform and accommodate patient motion to reduce irritation from the presence of a foreign body.